

Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

OMB-01 PPT-02 SCA-01 AID-20 RSR-01 /093 W

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R 171102Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2629

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 8599

PASS USIA

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CB

SUBJECT: GKR EFFORTS TO LIMIT FOREIGN PRESS CORPS

1. BECAUSE THE AUGUST 15 CESSATION OF U.S. AIR SUPPORT HAS BROUGHT JOURNALISTS INTO PHNOM PENH IN FAR GREATER NUMBER THAN THE KHMER CAN HANDLE AND BECAUSE HIDDEN IN THIS INFUX HAS BEEN AT LEAST ONE REPORTER HAVING A VERY POOR REPUTATION HERE, THE GKR HAS DECIDED TO IMPOSE NEW CONTROLS ON THE ENTRY OF NEWSMEN. MINISTRY OF INFORMATION OFFICIALS INFORM US THAT THEY HOPE IN PARTICULAR TO BRING THE FOREIGN PRESS CORPS DOWN FROM APPROXIMATELY EIGHTY TO UNDER FIFTY AND TO PREVENT THE ENTRY OF SUCH PERSONS AS LE MONDE'S CLAUDE POMONTI, WHOSE SCATHING MARXIST DESCRIPTION OF CAMBODIAN SOCIETY AROUSED MUCH ANIMOSITY HERE AND WHO MANAGED TO OBTAIN A TOURIST VISA ON HIS ARRIVAL LAST WEEK AT POCHENTONG AIRPORT.

2. GKR EMBASSIES ABROAD ARE BEING INSTRUCTED TO REFUSE ENTRY VISAS TO ALL FREE LANCE JOURNALISTS

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AND PHOTOGRAPHERS AS WELL AS TO NEWSMEN REPRESENTING

MEDIA WHICH HAVE SHOWN CLEAR HOSTILITY TOWARD THE GKR OR WHICH HAVE LITTLE INFLUENCE. PERIODICALS WITH SIGNIFICANT AUDIENCES WILL BE LIMITED TO ONLY ONE REPRESENTATIVE, NEWS AGENCIES AND RADIO NETWORKS WILL BE ALLOWED TWO, AND TELEVISION NETWORKS THREE.

3. WE HAVE QUERIED THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION REGARDING THE STATUS OF NEWSMEN ALREADY IN THE COUNTRY, NOTING THAT TWO AMERICAN JOURNALISTS HAVE COMPLAINED THAT AUTHORITIES HAVE REFUSED TO RENEW THEIR TEMPORARY TOURIST VISAS. ALTHOUGH A CLEAR POLICY ON THIS MATTER HAS NOT YET BEEN ESTABLISHED, WE GATHER THAT JOURNALISTS ENTERING THE COUNTRY ON TOURIST VISAS MAY BE REQUIRED TO LEAVE AND REAPPLY FOR ENTRY EVEN IF THEY NOW MEET THE CRITERIA CITED IN PARA 2. (WE AIDED SOME OF THESE JOURNALISTS TO OBTAIN THEIR CURRENT TEMPORARY PERMISSION TO FILE BY ATTESTING TO THEIR BONA FIDES.)

4. COMMENT: A FEW INCONVENIENCES MAY WELL RESULT FROM WHAT IS, WE BELIEVE, AN UNDERSTANDABLE ATTEMPT TO COPE WITH A PRESS POPULATION EXPLOSION. WE HOPE THE DEPARTMENT WILL HELP US PLACE POSSIBLE COMPLAINTS INTO PROPER PERSPECTIVE.

SWANK

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